

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 3 as follows:

Each blade server 202a-202c comprises a microcontroller 216, a hot pluggable bus host controller 218, and a hot pluggable bus 220. The host controller 218 provides an interface to other components of its blade server. The microcontroller 216 routes data packets between the management system 204 and the host controller 218 via the switch 206. The microcontroller 216 ~~It~~ is also capable of configuring an interface for the host controller 218 to communicate with the local drive 212 or remote drive 214. Because this functionality resides independently on each blade server 202a-202c, a plurality of blade servers can connect simultaneously with the same drive. Similarly, each blade 202a-202c server can simultaneously connect with a plurality of drives.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 12 as follows:

In accordance with the present invention, a plurality of blade servers can also simultaneously connect with the same local or remote drive. Figure 7 is a flowchart illustrating a preferred embodiment of a method for simultaneous connection between at least one blade server and a plurality of drives in accordance with the present invention. At least one blade server is configured to simultaneously connect with a plurality of drives coupled to the management system 204, via step 702. The plurality of drives can be a plurality of local drives 212, a plurality of remote drives 214, or for a combination of local drive(s) and remote drive(s). The microprocessor 216 for the blade server(s) configures the interface to its host controller 218 for connection with the plurality of drives. The microprocessor 216 for the blade server(s) routes data packets between the management system 204 and the plurality of drives via the switch 206. Then, the management system 204, and more particularly the management module 208, manages

the shared access to the plurality of drive(s) for the blade server(s), via step 704.